

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for recognizing patentable subject matter in the present Application. Applicants request entry of the present Amendment, and submit that the Amendment places the claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 11, 25 and 37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,508,814 to Sakurai et al. Claims 11, 25 and 37 are now cancelled.

Claims 53-56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,824,930 to Wheland et al. claims 53-56 are now cancelled. The Examiner has stated that claims 12-16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26-30, 32, 33, 38-43, 45, 46, 49 and 50 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 12 is now amended to include the limitations of claim 11, which is now cancelled. Claims 13, 15, 23 and 24 are being amended to depend from claim 12, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 12.

Claim 26 is now amended to include the limitations of claim 25, which is now cancelled. Claims 28, 35 and 36 are being amended to depend from claim 26, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 26.

Claim 38 is now amended to include the limitations of claim 37, which is now cancelled. Claims 39, 41, 51 and 52 are being amended to depend from claim 38, and therefore include all of the limitations of claim 38.

Claims 18, 31 and 44 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakurai in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,975,300 to Deviny. Claim 18 depends from claims 15, 16 or 17, which, as filed, depended from claim 11. However, claim 11 is now cancelled and claim 15 now depends from claim 12. Since the Examiner has stated that claim 12 would be allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of its base claim (i.e., claim 11), Applicants submit that claim 18 also includes those limitations and that claim 18 and claims dependent therefrom are also allowable.

Claim 31 depends from claims 28, 29 or 30, which, as filed, depended from claim 25. However, claim 25 is now cancelled and claim 28 depends from claim 26. Since the Examiner has stated that claim 26 would be allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of its base claim (i.e., claim 25), Applicants submit that claim 28 also includes those limitations and that claim 28 and claims dependent therefrom are also allowable.

Claim 44 depends from claims 41, 42, or 43, which, as filed, depended from claim 37. However, claim 37 is now cancelled and claim 41 depends from claim 38.

Since the Examiner has stated that claim 38 would be allowable if amended to include all of the limitations of its base claim (i.e., claim 37), Applicants submit that claim 41 also includes those limitations and that claim 41 and claims dependent therefrom are also allowable.

Claims 51 and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 1.3(a) as being unpatentable over Sakurai in view of "Immersion Lithography at 157 nm" by Switkes et al. Claims 51 and 52, as filed, depended from claim 37, which was rejected and is now cancelled. However, claims 51 and 52 are now amended to depend from claim 38. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 51 and 52 now include all of the limitations of claim 38 and are therefore allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 12-20, 22, 24, 26-33, 35, 36, 38-46 and 48-52 are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, allowance of the above-referenced application is respectfully requested. However, if there are any remaining issues with regard to any of the claims, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicants' undersigned representative to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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